

USAID GEO

Guyana Economic Opportunities

Results of a 2002 Client Satisfaction Survey for Go-Invest

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Executive Summary

In December 2002 the U.S. Agency of International Development-funded Guyana Economic Opportunities (GEO) program conducted a client satisfaction survey of businesses assisted throughout 2002 by the Guyana Office for Investment (GO-INVEST). The purpose of the exercise was to provide GO-INVEST with detailed client feedback so that the agency could analyze the quality of its services and staff. The data will enable GO-INVEST to understand the advancements it has made since an initial survey was conducted in 1999. Moreover, this information will allow GO-INVEST to determine the ways in which it can continue to improve its services.

Two questionnaires were developed and distributed to approximately 100 domestic and foreign companies. These questionnaires solicited feedback on a variety of issues, including, but not limited to: the types of assistance requested; the responsiveness and professionalism of staff; the benefits derived from GO-INVEST assistance; and the quality of services provided.

In total, forty-four (44) companies responded to the survey. This total is slightly lower than the 47 that responded to the 2001 survey. Of this total, 41 were domestic companies and 3 were foreign investors. Following are the key findings resulting from the survey:

Perhaps most importantly, 100% of all companies surveyed responded that they would utilize Go-Invest services in the future. While some companies surveyed provided constructive criticism or reported frustrations with Go-Invest, this willingness to continue to seek the agency's assistance is indicative of a growing satisfaction.

- Companies of all sizes requested GO-INVEST assistance - clients completing the survey employ from as few as 1 to more than 1,000 staff. Respondents indicated earnings ranging from less than G\$250,000 to more than G\$5 billion.
- The total number of international responses to the survey continues to be low, as was indicated in the 2001 report. The lack of an increase could be attributed to the rapid timeframe in which survey data was collected and, most realistically, to the worsening violence in Guyana which many firms cited as having stunted business growth and investment opportunities.
- Differing from the 2001 survey results, companies requesting GO-INVEST assistance most frequently sought investment in the manufacturing, and agriculture/fishing sectors and not in the handicraft sector. This change is most likely due to the fact that the last survey included a large number of responses to the trade fair survey which was composed of many firms specializing in handicrafts. This year there were very few responses to the trade fair survey and results are therefore focus on other sectors.
- Most respondents requested assistance in more than one area. By far the most requested assistance centered around concessions and land/factory space awards.

These areas also proved to be the most contentious as other Government agencies must be involved in the process, often slowing the process significantly. Many expressed dissatisfaction that GO-INVEST was not, indeed, the “one stop shop” the respondents had envisioned. To address this recurring comment, GO-INVEST should market itself as an assistance agency or liaison with other agencies and Ministries, counteracting the common notion that it is the only necessary visit to address these issues. With the correct information, many clients would most likely be more satisfied with the service received.

- This year, the five most commonly requested types of assistance, ranked in order, were: assistance with duty-free concessions, assistance in acquiring discretionary concessions, assistance in acquiring land/factory space, information on legal requirements, and information on key contact agencies.
- Ninety-seven percent (97%) of respondents rank the overall quality of GO-INVEST services as satisfactory or better. On a five-point scale, where 1 is excellent and 5 is poor, the average score given was 2.16 (above average). These mean scores represent a continued improvement, noted also in last year’s survey findings, from the results of the 1999 survey, when the average score was 3.4 (between satisfactory and below average) for all respondents; 3.6 (between satisfactory and below average) for domestic companies; and 2.4 (between above average and satisfactory) for foreign investors.
- GO-INVEST received slightly higher scores for the quality of its export assistance than for its investment assistance. The average score given concerning export assistance was 2.12 (between above average and satisfactory) compared to 2.24 (between above average and satisfactory) for investment assistance. It should be noted that there were more than twice as many respondents who sought investment assistance as those seeking help in exporting. As discussed elsewhere in this report, very few clients were able to easily identify which type of assistance they had received. Therefore, it is plausible that some evaluations of investment assistance should have been given to export assistance. However, because the clients themselves are unaware as to the type of assistance received, it was not possible to distribute evaluations 100% accurately between the divisions.
- Just as in 2001, respondents felt that GO-INVEST provided slightly more timely assistance in the area of export promotion than in investment promotion. For export assistance, 100% of the clients thought they had received timely and efficient assistance. For investment assistance, 70% of clients felt the assistance provided was timely. It is important to note that because lengthy processes such as concessions and land awards fall under the investment assistance, the common delays distort these perceptions of timeliness. Regardless, these scores represent a notable increase from the 1999 survey, when only 12% of local clients felt that services were provided in a timely manner.

- GO-INVEST clients indicated that they believe the agency's staff to be highly professional. These scores continue to improve, even from the high marks received in 2001. The average score on the five-point scale given to export-promotion staff was 1.875 (between excellent and above average); 100% of respondents felt that export-promotion staff ranked satisfactory or higher in terms of professionalism. The average score given to investment-promotion staff was 1.94 (between above average and satisfactory), with 97% of respondents giving a ranking of satisfactory or above. This also depicts a strong improvement from 1999, when only 38% of local clients considered the professionalism of staff to be adequate.
- Regarding requests for the acquisition of land, the average score given for the quality of services provided by GO-INVEST was 2.5, a slight increase from the 2001 score of 2.2 (both between above average and satisfactory); 90% of respondents gave a score of satisfactory or above in this category. These scores compare favorably with the 1999 survey, when the overall average score was 3.4 (between satisfactory and below average). It is important to note that many respondents to the survey were confused by the table-format question used to solicit this feedback and consequently did not provide accurate reviews. Of course, those whose requests for land had been approved gave higher marks than those whose requests were denied or left unanswered. The average amount of time to process a request for land/factory space was 9.81 months for completely processed requests and 3.33 months for pending requests. While this represents a slight increase in time from last year's result of approximately 7 months, it indicates a continued improvement from the 1999 survey results.
- For companies requesting duty-free concessions, the average score was 2.22, a slight improvement from last year (between above average and satisfactory). The percentage of respondents providing a score of satisfactory or above was 91% as opposed to 76% reported last year. Similar to the case of land, these scores also represented an increase since 1999, when the mean scores given were: 3.4 (between satisfactory and below average) overall. The total amount of time to process duty free concessions was reported as 1.82 months for completely processed requests and 2.44 months for pending requests. These figures are improvements from last year's results and represent drastic continued improvement from the 1999 results of over a year for duty-free concessions.
- For firms requesting other discretionary concessions, the average score was 2.6 again this year, exactly the same as last year (between above average and satisfactory), the lowest score for any ranked category. Only eighty percent (80%) of all respondents gave a score of satisfactory or better. The average amount of time business waited for completed requests for discretionary concessions was 0.13 months, and 6 months for pending requests.

- A continuing problem is under-use of GO-INVEST's website. Indeed, only 30% of those interviewed had seen the website and only 34% had used agency publications. While this is an increase from the 15% of reported website users a year ago, and 5% publication users, many indicated that they had "seen" the website rather than had used it on a regular basis.
- Just as in the 2001 survey, very few businesses indicated that they had experienced an increase in sales, employment, or exports as a result of GO-INVEST assistance. This fact could be the result of one of three factors: the investments facilitated by GO-INVEST were economically unproductive; the investments are still too new to have generated such benefits; or businesses are unable to calculate these increases. Given that respondents were those who used Go-Invest's service in 2002, it is highly likely that it is the first factor.

In addition to the numerical data highlighted above, companies that responded to the survey were asked to provide recommendations on possible GO-INVEST improvements. The key recommendations, all of which were noted by three or more respondents, are as follows:

- Above all other comments, most often repeated was the need to make GO-INVEST a "one stop shop" without the need to depend on other Government ministries' participation in business-related processes, especially concerning duty-free and discretionary concessions and land awards.
- Second to this comment, many firms noted that Mr. Geoffrey DaSilva, who was considerably well-regarded by most all interviewed, is faced with too much work to be effective with all businesses seeking assistance. As a solution to this problem, many suggested hiring additional staff to help the already overworked GO-INVEST staff. Others also suggested that Mr. DaSilva delegate more of his responsibility to other senior staff.
- Provide more frequent updates to those businesses waiting for decisions concerning requests for land or concessions.
- Have GO-INVEST staff visit *all* business locations to understand how each business runs and the constraints and advantages each faces.
- Actively seek businesses to work with GO-INVEST rather than wait to be approached by those in need of particular assistance. Along this same line, market GO-INVEST's services to the general public, creating more awareness.

I. Background

The Guyana Economic Opportunities (GEO) Project is a five-year project that is being funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and is being implemented by Chemonics International of Washington, D.C.

GEO's overall goal is to help the Government of Guyana create an improved climate for private investment. As a primary means of accomplishing this goal, GEO is providing assistance to the Guyana Office for Investment (GO-INVEST), the Government agency tasked with increasing investment in and exports from Guyana, to improve this agency's capacities.

Since 1999, the GEO project has assisted GO-INVEST to analyze its continued progress and improvements, focusing especially on those areas still in need of development and improvement. Client feedback was sought by an independent consultant not affiliated with GO-INVEST so as to receive honest and forthcoming reactions and criticisms. The data collected and discussed in this report will ideally allow GO-INVEST to continue its marked path of improvement.

II. Results of 1999 and 2001 Client Surveys

The GO-INVEST survey carried out in 1999 demonstrated that very few businesses—with the exception of foreign investors—felt that GO-INVEST was doing an adequate job. Some of the highlights of the initial survey include:

- Thirty-seven (37) of 63 companies that contacted GO-INVEST in 1999 responded to the questionnaire. Thirty (30), or 81%, of the respondents were Guyanese businesses, while seven (7), or 19%, were foreign investors.
- Ninety-seven percent (97%) of the businesses that had approached GO-INVEST did so to request assistance liaising with other government agencies, primarily to acquire leases for government-owned land or factory space, or to obtain duty-free or other discretionary concessions.
- A large number of local businesses were disappointed with the services provided by GO-INVEST: 63% did not feel that services were provided in an adequate fashion. Further, 62% of local firms interviewed considered the professionalism of GO-INVEST staff to be inadequate. Overall, local investors gave GO-INVEST a mean rating of 3.6 (between satisfactory and below average).
- In comparison to local investors, foreign investors gave a mean rating of 2.4 (between satisfactory and above average) to GO-INVEST.
- The decision-making process concerning land, duty-free concessions, and other discretionary concessions took an average of 14.7 months, 12.8 months, and 11

months, respectively, for local clients. For foreign investors, the relevant figures were 7.6 months, 4.3 months, and 4 months, respectively.

- A large discrepancy existed between the ability of local and foreign investors to have their requests granted by GO-INVEST. Only 28% of local investors had their requests for land granted, whereas the figure rose to 60% for foreign investors.

The above findings demonstrated that GO-INVEST had a very poor reputation among most Guyanese businesses, with a substantially higher approval rating demonstrated by foreign investors. Further, the 1999 survey demonstrated that GO-INVEST did not provide timely assistance in most cases. The key recommendations provided by interviewees included the need to enhance the professionalism of GO-INVEST staff, improve the timeliness of assistance provided by GO-INVEST, and clarify the role of GO-INVEST vis-à-vis other Government agencies.

The 2001 survey data showed hopeful advancements made by GO-INVEST to correct problem areas and concerns apparent in the 1999 survey. Highlights of marked areas of improvement include:

- Ninety-four percent (94%) of respondents ranked the overall quality of GO-INVEST services as satisfactory or better
- GO-INVEST received slightly higher scores for the quality of its export assistance than for its investment assistance. The average score given concerning export assistance was 2.3 (between above average and satisfactory) compared to 2.4 (between above average and satisfactory) for investment assistance.
- GO-INVEST clients indicated that they believe the agency's staff to be highly professional. The average score on the five-point scale given to all staff was 2 (above average)

III. Survey Methodology

A. Development of Questionnaire

To conduct the 2002 GO-INVEST client satisfaction survey, GEO largely worked within the framework established in the 2001 survey. Due to time constraints as well as the need to finalize all necessary interviews before the end of the year, GEO had considerably less time to solicit and collect client feedback through the surveys, often a lengthy process. Therefore, the survey used for this year's data collection did not differ from the survey developed for the 2001 report. In creating this 2001 questionnaire, GEO significantly expanded the length of the survey in order to gather crucial information for GO-INVEST. However, it became apparent during this survey that the length of the current questionnaire is inhibitive, as many businesses do not want to take seemingly longer periods of time to respond.

For future surveys, the following is recommended:

- Develop similar yet separate surveys for export and investment clients
- Eliminate a table-formatted questions to simplify format and avoid confusion
- Reformat to save space and reduce total number of pages
- Reword question #23 to read: “Do you have any specific problems or issues that you would like specifically brought up to GO-INVEST? If so, please describe below.”

In collecting data for this survey it was necessary to have face-to-face meetings with a vast majority of respondents. Many mentioned not having time to write down information and deliver/fax surveys. Additionally, when speaking with international clients it was clear that the longer survey was considered an inconvenience. For future surveys it would perhaps be recommendable to create a very simple and cost-effective on-line survey. The user could go to a specific website, answer the necessary questions, and submit the information quite easily. While it is true that many businesses do not have access to the internet, it would certainly be possible to set up a computer station in the GEO office and have the consultant

conducting the survey be available to help the client with the program. Giving this assistance would not create more work, as many clients needed one-on-one assistance filling out the paper survey as well. Because the on-line survey would easily collect the necessary data, eliminating the data input stage and side-stepping problems with handwriting and poorly completed questionnaires, the consultant would have more time to interview clients to get more detailed input. This type of on-line survey would also be attractive to international clients, which is important as responses from these clients have been lacking the past years. If it were ever impossible to use the electronic survey, the consultant could send a paper survey to the client and enter the information electronically him/herself. Should GO-INVEST chose to pursue this suggestion, it would be possible to design a simple survey on-line as well as a counterpart paper version.

B. Selection of Participants

While GEO played an active role in selecting participants for the 2001 survey, interviewing GO-INVEST staff to ascertain appropriateness of each firm selected, this year, largely due to time constraints. It was not possible to interview each Go-Invest technical officer to verify the appropriateness of including clients on the interview list. Because GO-INVEST still does not have a centralized information network, developing a truly comprehensive list proved to be an arduous and lengthy task. A key recommendation, consistent with customer feedback as well as past reports, is that GO-INVEST develop a networked computer system with a centralized database of all clients. The information technology assistance currently underway between GEO and GO-INVEST will soon address this constraint.

C. Difficulties Encountered

There were certain difficulties faced in conducting the survey, which were similar to those problems encountered during both the 1999 and 2001 surveys. The key difficulties included:

- *Incorrect contact information.* In addition to those firms that could not be contacted at all, the contact information provided by GO-INVEST for more than one-sixth of the companies that received the questionnaire had changed, and correct information had to be tracked down through a variety of means.
- *Difficulty in contacting individuals.* Most businesses had to be contacted two or more times before the individual who had received the survey could be contacted directly. A few of those individuals that had received the survey were traveling outside the country and could not participate in the survey. However, in many such cases it was possible to send surveys to clients via email in order to facilitate their electronic completion and submission. While many businesses indicated a willingness to complete the survey sent out via email, there were very limited responses.
- *Inability to properly explain the purpose of the survey.* Just as indicated in the 2001 report, a number of respondents to the survey did not understand that the GEO project was independent from GO-INVEST, notwithstanding the information provided in a detailed cover letter prepared by GEO's Chief of Party. Most of the time, when the separation between GEO and GO-INVEST was explained in person, respondents felt more at ease in completing the survey.
- *Inhibitive length and design of survey.* While a longer survey seemed necessary for the 2001 analysis, it is highly advisable that a different, more compact survey be developed for the future. Most all companies were hesitant to complete all eight pages of questions, often stating that they did not have the necessary time. Additionally, while the design of the survey used seemed logical and self-explanatory, a large percentage of respondents were highly confused by the format, often resulting in information being difficult to properly decipher during the analysis phase.
- *Client uncertainty regarding Export/Investment departments at GO-INVEST.* An extremely large percentage of responding clients, when asked whether they had worked with the Export or Investment departments at GO-INVEST were not able to answer the question. Therefore, because the survey included questions regarding both departments, asking respondents to respond only to the corresponding questions, information was often misdirected. To solve this issue, two main steps are suggested. First, if it is necessary to have separate departments, these departments must be organized and marketed to their clients in such a way as to promote easy identification and understanding. All clients, essentially, should know which department is working with their business and why. Secondly, separate surveys for export and investment clients should be developed to solicit the necessary

information. This separation would largely help reduce the size of the survey as well as eliminate confusion.

C. Compilation of Data

In the interest of continuity and easy comparison of result findings by year, data were analyzed to answer the same questions asked in the previous two surveys. To facilitate data analysis, a document was created in Microsoft Excel to record each businesses responses to the survey, both quantitative as well as qualitative. This data record allowed for efficient analysis of data on a continuously on-going basis; not all surveys had to be collected before beginning to process data. For future surveys, it would be highly advisable to use a similar, or even improved, system to collect data. As mentioned earlier, one possibility is the creation of an electronic survey on a website which could be accessed from individual businesses or homes. Many problems, from indecipherable handwriting to incomplete responses, could be avoided with a web-based system.

IV. Survey Results

A. Summary of Findings

This section provides the results of the survey, presented in tabular form. Where necessary, tables are supported by further explanations or analysis.

Tables 1-32 present information provided by the 43 respondents. Of these respondents, 41 represent domestic companies, while 3 represent foreign investors. Of the domestic respondents, 4 responded to the trade-fair questionnaire regarding visits abroad hosted or facilitated by GO-INVEST.

B. Respondent Characteristics

As indicated in Tables 1 and 2, respondents to the questionnaire represented a wide array of businesses, from small enterprises to large corporations

Not surprisingly, the total number of foreign clients assisted by GO-INVEST in 2002, as well as the number responding to the survey, was substantially lower than in 1999, just as was reported in the last survey report. Many businesses interviewed, both domestic and international, indicated worsening violence and unrest in Guyana to be limiting business opportunities.

The total number of responses to Questions 1 and 2 is less than the total number of respondents given that some companies considered sales and employment figures to be proprietary information. While many firms were willing to provide sales information, because the survey was conducted in the last weeks of 2002, many businesses did not have accurate figures to report.

Table 1. Number of Staff Employed by Respondent Companies

Number of Employees	Number	Percent
1-10	7	18%
11-25	7	18%
26-100	11	28%
101-500	12	30%
501-1,000	2	5%
1,001+	1	3%

Table 2. Annual Sales of Respondent Companies

2002 Sales (in G\$)	Number	Percent
Less than \$10,000,000	5	19%
\$10,00,001 - \$50,000,000	4	15%
\$50,000,001 - \$100,000,000	1	4%
\$100,000,001 - \$1,000,000,000	9	33%
\$1,000,000,001 - \$5,000,000,000	6	22%
More than \$5,000,000,001	2	7%

Table 3. Location of Responding Firms

Location	Number	Percent
Domestic	41	93%
International	3	7%

Note: Due to difficulties in collecting completed surveys, which were compounded with international firms, the figures represented here may not be representative of the distribution of domestic and international firms utilizing Go-Invest's services.

C. Sector of Economy Targeted by GO-INVEST Clients

GO-INVEST assisted companies targeting a broad array of economic sectors, the most prevalent being agriculture/fishing and manufacturing. The figures in Table IV may surpass the total number of respondents as some investors targeted more than one sector.

Table 4. Sectors Targeted by Investors Requesting GO-INVEST Assistance

Target Sector	All Respondents	
	Number	Percent
Agriculture/Fishing	11	28%
Manufacturing	10	25%
Mining/Forestry	4	10%
Social Services	1	3%
Transportation	3	8%
Tourism/Handicrafts	7	18%
Telecommunications/IT	5	13%
Other	8	20%
Note: Because some firms sought information for more than one sector, percentages may not total to 100%.		

D. Type of Assistance or Information Requested

Although clients requested a range of services from GO-INVEST, by far the most prevalent type of assistance requested concerned awards of duty free or discretionary concessions as well as land and/or factory space.

It should also be noted that the total number of requests for assistance is far greater than the number of respondents, seeing that GO-INVEST's clients requested, on average, more than one type of assistance. The sometimes high number of requests per client speaks to the image that most investors have of GO-INVEST: that of a one-stop shop for investment. Likewise, the high percentage of clients seeking concessions and land awards lends itself to the frustrations that many clients expressed that GO-INVEST is not this "one-stop shop" because these particular requests require the involvement of other Government actors.

Table 5. Export Information / Assistance Requested

Type of Investment Assistance	<i>All Respondents</i>	
	Number	Percent
Profiles on export opportunities	4	10%
Steps necessary to export	4	10%
Macroeconomic data	3	8%
Foreign market information	6	15%
Information on sources of financing	6	15%
Information on key contact agencies	10	25%
Information on foreign buyers	5	13%
Information on trade fairs	4	10%
Assistance in organizing visit abroad	3	8%
Information on foreign legal requirements for exporting	5	13%
Evaluation of export readiness	3	8%
Assistance in preparing business or export plan	6	15%
Other	0	0%
Note: Because some firms sought information regarding more than one topic, percentages will not total to 100%		

Table 6. Investment Information/Assistance Requested

Type of Investment Assistance	<i>All Respondents</i>	
	Number	Percent
Profiles on investment opportunities	5	13%
Steps necessary to commence business operations	13	33%
Macroeconomic data	2	5%
Market information	4	10%
Information on sources of financing	7	18%
Information on key contact agencies	9	23%
Information on legal requirements	10	25%
Assistance in acquiring work permits	5	13%
Assistance in preparing business plan	4	10%
Information on labor laws or wage rates	8	20%
Sectoral data	1	3%
Data on regions	2	5%
Assistance in acquiring land and/or factory space	13	33%
Assistance in acquiring duty-free concessions	27	68%
Assistance in acquiring discretionary concessions	16	40%
Other	5	13%
Note: Because some firms sought information regarding more than one topic, percentages will not total to 100%		

E. Quality of Export and Investment Assistance

The improvement from the 1999 survey in the average score given by respondents when queried about the quality of GO-INVEST's investment and export services continues to be notable. The vast majority of businesses, indeed 97% of those who responded, view GO-INVEST as being able to meet most of their needs in the provision of both investment and export assistance.¹ Further, most all respondents rank GO-INVEST's staff high in terms of professionalism. Very few questioned the professionalism of any GO-INVEST staff, but rather noted that the resources and time available for them to do their jobs were sometime lacking. It is worth noting that both Mr. DaSilva and Ms. Kissoon received many positive comments through our survey; many clients truly appreciate their dedication and effectiveness.

As stated above, one area of relative weakness noted by domestic respondents was GO-INVEST's available resources to complete their work and assist their clients.

Separate responses were requested of companies that requested assistance in the areas of investment or exports, given that these functions are handled by distinct staff at GO-INVEST. However, as mentioned earlier in the report, clients were often unable to clearly recall which department handled their staff.

Table 7. Efficiency of Export Information/Assistance Provided

<i>All Respondents</i>			
Efficient		Inefficient	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent
8	100%	0	0%

Table 8. Quality of Export Information/Assistance Provided

Excellent (1)		Above Average (2)		Satisfactory (3)		Inadequate (4)		Poor (5)	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<i>All Respondents</i>									
3	38%	2	25%	2	25%	1	13%	0	0%
Mean Score:									2.125

Table 9. Level of Professionalism of Staff Providing Export Information/Assistance

Excellent (1)		Above Average (2)		Satisfactory (3)		Inadequate (4)		Poor (5)	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<i>All Respondents</i>									
3	38%	3	38%	2	25%	0	0%	0	0%
Mean Score:									1.875

¹ A client is determined to have had its needs met in those cases where the client ranked the quality of GO-INVEST's services as a 1, 2, or 3 on a five-point scale.

Table 10. Quality of Available Export-related Resources

Excellent (1)		Above Average (2)		Satisfactory (3)		Inadequate (4)		Poor (5)	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<i>All Respondents</i>									
1	13%	1	13%	6	75%	0	0%	0	0%
Mean Score:									2.625

Table 11. Efficiency of Investment Information/Assistance Provided

<i>All Respondents</i>			
Efficient		Inefficient	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent
23	70%	10	30%

Table 12. Quality of Investment Information/Assistance Provided

Excellent (1)		Above Average (2)		Satisfactory (3)		Inadequate (4)		Poor (5)	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<i>All Respondents</i>									
10	30%	9	27%	10	30%	4	12%	0	0%
Mean Score:									2.24

Table 13. Level of Professionalism of Staff Providing Investment Information/Assistance

Excellent (1)		Above Average (2)		Satisfactory (3)		Inadequate (4)		Poor (5)	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<i>All Respondents</i>									
15	45%	6	18%	11	33%	1	3%	0	0%
Mean Score:									1.94

Table 14. Quality of Available Investment-related Resources

Excellent (1)		Above Average (2)		Satisfactory (3)		Inadequate (4)		Poor (5)	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<i>All Respondents</i>									
5	19%	2	8%	12	46%	6	23%	1	4%
Mean Score:									2.85

F. Quality of Assistance in Helping Clients Obtain Land or Concessions

Since 1999, the mean score given with regard to the quality of assistance provided by GO-INVEST to investors wishing to acquire land or concessions has increased notably. However, as reported in the 2001 survey, the information collected concerning GO-INVEST's handling of requests for land or concessions still raises a number of issues.

The main problems encountered center upon the lack of a consistent process which keeps all clients who seek concessions or land – regardless of whether formally or in a conversation – informed of the process and their status. Although it behooves investors to be as clear as possible in requesting assistance and to provide all the necessary information required to process requests, GO-INVEST should follow up with every potential request for land or concessions, regardless of where and how the request may arise. A lack of consistency in this process lead respondents to react differently to the question concerning the outcome of requests for land or concessions. Some respondents considered pending request to be partially approved, whereas others considered such

requests to be not approved. In effect, both are correct interpretations, and thus the surveyor had to clarify responses to make the responses more useful.

A consistent problem encountered was that most clients had no idea how long they had been waiting for concessions or land and were only able to provide approximations. This lack of awareness makes reporting on these key issues difficult. A streamlined documentation system would enable GO-INVEST to keep all clients informed as well as provide records of the process.

Naturally, the scores given concerning assistance provided in processing requests for land or concessions are directly correlated to the percentage of investors who had their requests granted. Overall, investors considered the quality of assistance best with regard to the handling of requests for duty free concessions and worse for the processing of request for discretionary concessions and land, however the majority of responses were favorable for all. The percentage of investors who were granted their request for land, duty-free concessions, and other discretionary concessions was 70%, 74%, and 30%, respectively. The average scores give with regard to assistance in acquiring land, duty-free concessions, and other discretionary concessions was 2.5, 2.22 and 2.6 (all between above average and satisfactory), respectively.

The amount of time required to process requests varied widely, and thus the determination of an average processing time is of limited use. Some investors—most typically large, well-known local businesses—received an approval for their request within a matter of days or weeks, whereas others claim to have been waiting for years to receive a final decision. The wide array of answers concerning timing speaks to the ongoing need to clarify the concessions-granting process to ensure equal treatment of all investors. When such treatment is not realistically possible, clients should be kept constantly informed regarding their requests.

Table 15. Outcome of Requests for Land and/or Factory Space

Granted		Not Granted		Partially Approved	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<i>All Respondents</i>					
7	70%	0	0%	3	30%

Table 16. Quality of Assistance Concerning Requests for Land and/or Factory Space

Excellent (1)		Above Average (2)		Satisfactory (3)		Inadequate (4)		Poor (5)	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<i>All Respondents</i>									
1	10%	4	40%	4	40%	1	10%	0	0%
Mean Score:									2.50

Table 17. Status of Applications for Land and/or Factory Space

Completely Processed		Partially Completed/In Progress		No Response from GO-INVEST		Other	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<i>All Respondents</i>							
6	60%	3	30%	0	0%	1	10%

Table 18. Average Amount of Time to Process Requests for Land and/or Factory Space (in months)

<i>All Respondents</i>	
Completely Processed	Pending
9.81	3.33
Note: Most survey respondents did not complete this portion of the survey or were not able to recall the amount of time in processing requests. Data is therefore less representative than in other questions.	

Table 19. Outcome of Requests for Duty Free Concessions

Granted		Not Granted		Partially Approved	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<i>All Respondents</i>					
17	74%	3	13%	3	13%

Table 20. Quality of Assistance Concerning Requests for Duty Free Concessions

Excellent (1)		Above Average (2)		Satisfactory (3)		Inadequate (4)		Poor (5)	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<i>All Respondents</i>									
6	26%	8	35%	7	30%	2	9%	0	0%
Mean Score:									2.22

Table 21. Status of Applications for Duty Free Concessions

Completely Processed		Partially Completed/In Progress		No Response from GO-INVEST		Other	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<i>All Respondents</i>							
11	50%	10	45%	1	5%	0	0%

Table 22. Average Amount of Time to Process Requests for Duty Free Concessions (in months)

<i>All Respondents</i>	
Completely Processed	Pending
1.82	2.44

Table 23. Outcome of Requests for Discretionary Concessions

Granted		Not Granted		Partially Approved	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<i>All Respondents</i>					
3	30%	5	50%	2	20%

Table 24. Quality of Assistance Concerning Requests for Discretionary Concessions

Excellent (1)		Above Average (2)		Satisfactory (3)		Inadequate (4)		Poor (5)	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<i>All Respondents</i>									
2	20%	3	30%	3	30%	1	10%	1	10%
Mean Score:									2.60

Table 25. Status of Applications for Discretionary Concessions

Completely Processed		Partially Completed/In		No Response from GO		Other	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<i>All Respondents</i>							
4	44%	3	33%	1	11%	1	11%

Table 26. Average Amount of Time to Process Requests for Discretionary Concessions (in months)

<i>All Respondents</i>	
Completely Processed	Pending
0.13	6
Note: Most survey respondents did not complete this portion of the survey or were not able to recall the amount of time in processing requests. Data may therefore be less representative than in other questions.	

G. Level of Staff Responsiveness

The tables listed under this section present the frequency of "yes" and "no" answers given by respondents in response to questions concerning staff responsiveness. The high percentage of "yes" answers speaks to the area where GO-INVEST continues to make improvements since the 1999 survey: its ability to be responsive to the majority of clients. The lowest frequency of "yes" answers was given in response to the question "*Did a staff member visit your business?*"; less than half of respondents answered "yes" to this query. It is important to note that many responding clients mentioned in interviews that no GO-INVEST staff member ever visited their business sites despite being invited. Of great interest, those clients who had been visited held that such a visit was one of the most positive experiences they had with GO-INVEST.

Table 27. Feedback on Staff Responsiveness

Question	Yes		No	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<i>All Respondents</i>				
Did staff devote enough time to your inquiry?	33	85%	6	15%
Did staff respond to your calls or e-mails?	36	90%	4	10%
Did you meet face-to-face with a staff member?	37	95%	2	5%
Did a staff member visit your business?	24	62%	14	36%
Do you know the name of the officer assigned to assist you with your request?	31	79%	8	21%
Did staff follow-up subsequent to your consultation to review results of assistance?	30	75%	10	25%

H. Use of GO-INVEST Resources

Under-use of GO-INVEST's website and publications continues to be a problem. The low number of local respondents claiming to have visited GO-INVEST's web site or read GO-INVEST literature speaks a great deal about the need of the agency to do a better job publicizing these important resources. A common response by domestic investors to the question: "*Did you utilize GO-INVEST's web site?*" was: "GO-INVEST has a web site?" However, seeing that many local investors only wish to interact with GO-INVEST for assistance in acquiring land or concessions, and not to obtain general information, it is uncertain whether local businesses would ever consultant these resources with frequency.

One very helpful suggestion, in line with the feeling that GO-INVEST needs to market itself to the private sector in Guyana, is that the agency should use its website to highlight success stories or newsworthy information. The information, many commented, needs to be updated on a regular basis to ensure that it remains current at all times.

Table 28. Utilization of Web Site and Printed Materials

Question	Yes		No	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<i>All Respondents</i>				
Did you utilize the GO-INVEST web site?	12	30%	28	70%
Did you utilize any GO-INVEST publications?	13	34%	25	66%

I. Benefits and Effectiveness of Working with GO-INVEST

A vast majority of respondents—97%— an increase from the 2001 survey, rated the overall quality of GO-INVEST services as satisfactory or above. Further, not one respondent rated their interaction with GO-INVEST as poor. This represents a dramatic improvement from the 1999 survey, when two-thirds of local respondents and over 50% of all respondents ranked the agency's services as less than satisfactory. The average score given to GO-INVEST, on a scale from 1 to 5, was 2.16 (above average) overall.

Interestingly, only 54% of all respondents indicated that their needs were fully met. However, many investors with pending requests have not yet had their needs met, and thus marked "partially" in some cases, although many of these responses would undoubtedly turn to "yes" answers in the future.

The total number of responses for Table 30 does not equal the total number of respondents for two reasons. First, some respondents selected more than one benefit. Second, those investors who are still working with GO-INVEST on their request have not yet received any benefit, although they may in the future. Just as in the 2001 survey, the information in Table 30 is also interesting because of the low number of respondents having indicated an improvement in production, sales or exports as a result of GO-INVEST assistance. Just as in last year, none of those few investors that indicated an increase in one of these areas was able to quantify the increase. Either these investments have been economically unproductive; investments were made too recently to have had resulted in an economic benefit; or the investors are unable to evaluate the results of agency assistance. Whatever the precise cause, the responses speak to the need for GO-INVEST to develop better systems for tracking the long-term results of its assistance, since it appears that many of the agency's clients are unable to do so on their own. It also indicates the need for the GEO project to continue to assist local businesses to develop good management practices so that they are able to track changes in their sales and profit, and perhaps eventually be able to attribute these changes to assistance provided by GO-INVEST.

The answers presented in Table 32, which present "yes" and "no" responses to the question "*Would you use GO-INVEST's services again?*", are indicative of the growing satisfaction with the agency's services. However, some clients did express marked dissatisfaction and indicated that they would only return to GO-INVEST because it was their only available option for requests such as concessions and land awards.

Table 29. Ability of GO-INVEST to meet client needs

Response	Number	Percent
<i>All Respondents</i>		
Met Needs	20	54%
Did Not Meet Needs	2	5%
Partially Met Needs	15	41%

Table 30. Benefits of GO-INVEST Assistance

Type of Investment Assistance	All Respondents	
	Number	Percent
Received duty-free concessions	22	55%
Received discretionary concessions	6	15%
Received land and/or factory space	6	15%
Identified new customers	7	18%
Identified new business partner	2	5%
Identified new export market	0	0%
Identified new domestic product market	8	20%
Better understanding of business regulations	4	10%
Assisted in participating in business visit abroad	1	3%
Assisted in preparing business, investment or export plan	0	0%
Assisted in accessing Caribbean Export Development Agency financing	3	8%
Assisted in accessing European Union Business Assistance Scheme financing	3	8%
Assisted in accessing other source of financing	3	8%
Better understanding of export potential	0	0%
Better understanding of domestic market potential	2	5%
Started new local business	0	0%
Began exporting	0	0%
Increased production	0	0%
Increased exports	0	0%
Increased sales	0	0%
Increased employment	2	5%
None/request pending	0	0%
Other	3	8%
Note: Respondents generally noted multiple benefits of Go-Invest assistance. Percent totals therefore do not equal 100%.		

Table 31. Overall Score Given to GO-INVEST

Excellent (1)		Above Average (2)		Satisfactory (3)		Inadequate (4)		Poor (5)	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All Respondents									
13	35%	8	22%	13	35%	3	8%	0	0%
Mean Score:									2.16

Table 32. Desire to Work with GO-INVEST Again

All Respondents			
Yes		No	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent
42	100%	0	0%

V. Respondent Commentary

Just as for the 2001 survey, when given the opportunity, most companies participating in the survey provided positive feedback about GO-INVEST. Without question, the most frequently voiced comment was the drastic improvement in GO-INVEST services since a new CEO was named in 2001. Many respondents noted that GO-INVEST's investment officers appear to be much more efficient and responsive since the change in GO-INVEST leadership. As mentioned earlier, Ms. Janet Kissoon was often praised for her valuable work.

Most all of the respondents were highly satisfied with the professional nature of GO-INVEST staff. However, it was often noted that the staff is over-worked and not given sufficient authority to act independently. Many respondents who highly praised the CEO also suggested that some of his responsibility be delegated to his highly-capable staff to allow for more timely responses to requests for assistance. Regardless of any constructive criticism, the review is overall highly positive considering that a key problem highlighted in the 1999 client survey was the lack of professionalism of GO-INVEST personnel.

Interestingly enough, most of the 2002 client recommendations concerning needed improvements are the same as those suggestions made during the 2001 and 1999 surveys.

The key suggestions made by respondents are highlighted below:

- Strengthen GO-INVEST's mandate with relation to other Government ministries, particularly concerning its role in awarding concessions and land. This recommendation was repeated more than any other, and was specifically noted by nearly half of all respondents. Even respondents who were pleased with the services provided by GO-INVEST suggested the need to make this change. Should this mandate not be able to be strengthened, it is highly advisable that GO-INVEST begin an intense marketing campaign to educate its clients regarding its role and position within the Government. As it currently stands, nearly 100% of GO-INVEST's clients expect the agency to be a "one stop shop;" as they become aware that it is not so, they become disillusioned and frustrated. Communications and education could proactively address these common and often-repeated complaints.
- Continue to improve the timeliness and responsiveness of staff. Even though many respondents noted that GO-INVEST had improved in this regard, it remains a key area of concern for many clients. Delegate high-level responsibilities to other capable staff to avoid any constraints to timely decisions. Also, hire additional employees to assist overworked staff. Related to the above suggestions, many businesses feel that GO-INVEST cannot improve its efficiency and responsiveness unless it is able to hire additional investment officers. Many businesses noted that it is evident that GO-INVEST staff are stretched too thin.
- Create a mandate that each GO-INVEST staff member must, without exception, visit the site of the business they are assisting (this would need to be revisited for

international firms). One of the most common complaints heard was that no one from GO-INVEST was familiar with each business' unique talents and constraints.

- Provide more frequent updates to those businesses waiting for decisions concerning requests for land or concessions. Create a documentation and tracking system to monitor this process and share this information with clients on a regular basis.
- Indicate to those businesses not receiving land or concessions why their requests were not approved. This is extremely important as a select few businesses refused to complete the survey because they were so disillusioned with lack of transparency at GO-INVEST. While GO-INVEST may be extremely ethical and fair, if this process is not communicated in a transparent manner, suspicion and frustration are allowed to grow unnecessarily.
- Market services to the private sector seeking new business. Do not wait for businesses to approach GO-INVEST for assistance. In line with this recommendation, develop better investor-targeting programs to attract high-quality foreign investment to Guyana.
- Use the website as a dynamic tool to attract businesses and keep them informed. Communicate to all businesses that they should use this website and make sure it is kept updated at all times.